



SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING COMMISSION

PROCESS AND SCHEDULE

The Environmental Planning Commission (EPC) is an appointed, 9-member, volunteer citizen board with authority on many land use and planning issues. The EPC conducts regularly scheduled public hearings on the third Thursday of each month in the Plaza del Sol hearing room. The Plaza del Sol building is located at 600 2nd Street NW in downtown Albuquerque. Hearings generally begin at 8:30 am and conclude when adjourned by the EPC Chair. The EPC regularly holds **Study Sessions** on the 2nd Thursday of each month (generally beginning at 4:00 pm) to receive staff report packets for items on the all-day hearing on the following week. From time-to-time, the EPC conducts special hearings on the 2nd Thursday of the month, and occasionally schedules meetings at other times. All hearings and meetings are announced in the Albuquerque Journal and are posted on the City's web site: www.cabq.gov (from the Planning Dept. page, click on Meeting Agendas/Actions, then select the desired EPC agenda).

The EPC has authority to decide on site development plan approval requests for SU-1 zoned and shopping center designated sites and most zone change requests. The commission also hears appeals from the Development Review Board. The EPC reviews and provides recommendations to the City Council on annexation requests, certain zone change requests, proposed amendments to the *Zoning Code* and adoption of major amendments to Rank I, II and III Plans – including sector plans and area plans.

The monthly application deadline for EPC requests is the first Thursday of each month at Noon. There are 42 days from the application deadline to the public hearing. The Planning Department assigns a staff planner to each application. Application materials are distributed to various City departments, public utilities and government agency representatives (Public Works, Environmental Health, Parks & Recreation, Fire, Police, Transit, MRCOG and others) for review and comment. Agency comments are due to the Planning Department approximately two weeks after the application deadline.

Pre-Hearing Discussion occurs at 1:30 pm in the Plaza del Sol 3rd floor conference room on the Wednesday three weeks before the EPC hearing. Its purpose is to conduct review of agency comments, giving the applicant the opportunity to discover technical or policy issues related to their application(s). Applicants or staff may raise the appropriateness of a deferral during Pre-Hearing Discussion. Applicants (or their agents) are required to attend Pre-Hearing Discussion; the public is welcome to attend.

Public Notification of applications to the EPC occurs in several ways. **First**, applicants are required by ordinance to notify two officers from all recognized neighborhood associations that are affected by the request before submitting an application. **A second** means of notification is publication of a Legal Advertisement in the Albuquerque Journal at least 15 days prior to the public hearing. **A third** notification mechanism is mailed notice sent by the Planning Department to all property owners within 100 feet of the subject property. **A fourth** is the required placement of one or more yellow request signs on the subject property for the 15 days that precede the public hearing. **A fifth** mechanism is the monthly listing of upcoming EPC hearing items in the City's *Neighborhood News*. **And finally**, EPC agendas are posted on the City's web site one week prior to each hearing.

Planning Department staff reports are distributed to the EPC and made available to the public one week prior to the public hearing at a study session. Hearing agendas are also made available at this time. Staff reports recommend approval, denial or deferral of applications based on compliance with relevant City plans, policies and development standards. **Submittal of materials for consideration by the EPC** is through the Planning Department. Materials submitted 10 days or more before the hearing are included in the staff report packets. The EPC may choose not to consider written materials that are submitted at the public hearing; at minimum, materials should be submitted at least 48 hours in advance (Tuesday by 9:00 am) of the public hearing.

At the beginning of each EPC Hearing, the agenda is reviewed and finalized by the Commission. Agenda items are heard in sequence, without a predetermined start time or overall time allotment for any item. The public is encouraged to testify; however, time limits are typically placed on all testimony. **Appeals** of EPC decisions must be filed within 15 days of the decision. Appeals are heard by the City Council.

As mentioned above, **the City Council has approval authority on certain types of land use applications**, including annexations and amendments to the *Zoning Code*. Following EPC hearing on such matters, the Planning Department is responsible for preparing a transmittal packet for City Council review. In addition to the EPC staff report materials, Council packets include a transmittal memo, draft legislation (if needed), a fiscal impact analysis (FIA) and the transcribed minutes from the relevant EPC hearing(s) on the matter. Upon assemblage, the transmittal packets are signed by the Planning Director and transmitted for review to the Office of Management and Budget, the Legal Department and then the Mayor's office. Once signed by the Mayor, the transmittal packet is forwarded to the Council Services office to be scheduled for introduction and then for public hearing. Generally, it takes about 30 days from the time a transmittal packet leaves the Planning Department offices until it is introduced at City Council.